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Catalina Villamarin's Digital Media Portfolio

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FINAL PORTFOLIO

M.S. in Communications and Media

Catalina Villamarín Martínez
LYNN UNIVERSITY

Artist's Statement – Introduction

The arts have always been a path through which I have discovered the basic building blocks of what I am. Yet, as Stuart Hall proposes, this process of identification, has led me to find answers at the point of suture between what I am, and what I am not. My visual work addresses some of my thoughts and findings on basic questions about the human experience and my sense of place and cultural identity. In other words, my “human-ness” and my “Colombian-ness”.

While most of my work spans across pencil drawing, vector illustration, photography or a combination of the three, this program has also allowed me to explore visuals set in motion; a branch of my work which has been greatly informed and inspired by my background in music. Overall, my work tends to be figurative in nature and guided by classical principles of balance and composition.

Artist's Statement – Themes

Animal “Human-ness”

For years, we have believed a narrative in which a moral superiority of sorts sets the human species apart from animals. Yet my fascination with animals stems from their “humanity” and all these qualities that we have so preciously labeled as such. It is no coincidence that animal characters like Felix the Cat and Mickey Mouse captivated the world right after World War I when, disillusioned by mankind, audiences turned to animals looking to find traces of humanity in them.

This sentiment draws me to animals today. One hundred years later, we need to find those traces once again, and be able to connect on the basis of our own humanity in spite of our differences. Through my work, I seek to portray animals in a way that blurs these distinctions, allowing the viewer to connect with the “humanity” of these characters and have a moment of empathy with them.

Artist's Statement – Themes

Long-Distance “Colombian-ness”

I have never been more conscious of what makes me Colombian than in the time I have lived in the United States. Despite the distance, or perhaps because of it, I have closely followed and become more critical of current issues, and my visual work has become a platform to voice my views.

Additionally, I have become aware of the many vivid visual and tactile memories of the handmade artisanal objects that surrounded me growing up and that are now part of my cultural identity. Items that, beyond their function, are enriched with intricate visual details and carry the story of all the cultures that have converged in Colombia. As I venture back into creating visual work, I have realized that a bond that links me to my country is my resourcefulness and desire to create with my hands. Therefore, regardless of the media, I strive to acknowledge my Colombian-ness by keeping an element of human craftsmanship in my aesthetics, whether through the different techniques, or by including visual cues of traditional Colombian crafts into my work.

GVC 585:
Aesthetics/Practice of 3D
Animation

Casita Colombiana:

Located in the hills of Colombia's coffee region, Casita Colombiana is an indoor/outdoor 3D environment built in the style of a hacienda style house, typical of the colonial period in Colombia. The house's indoor decoration, which features artisanal objects and kitchen essentials from different regions of Colombia, is focused in the kitchen/dining room area, as family events, tend to gather around the kitchen and food is the main element.

The outdoor is enclosed in a cylindrical shape with a panoramic view of the region's mountains, and the house's exterior features a hacienda's central patio, which in many cases has a central well or fountain. The untuned *tiple* hanging by the door is believed to be the best way to keep the devil from entering a house. The devil will be tempted to play it, but tuning this 12-stringed instrument is so hard, he will spend all night in this task.



GVC 570: Digital Storytelling

“Composed”

When asked about how he has built his life around composition, Colombian composer Julián Brijaldo says “It’s not like you’re going to find a sign or ad that says ‘Composer Wanted’... So I have to create my own opportunities.”

This portrait documentary was my first final project as part of the master’s program in communication and media, and is a tribute to him and every single thing he manages to accomplish every day. It follows a week of his life as he juggles being a composer, teacher, and doctoral student in order to create these opportunities to have his music performed and his voice heard.

Through the use of different camera shots, I sought to show the myriad of tasks he sets out to accomplish, reflecting his sometimes exhausting, neverending days.



GVC 530:
Aesthetics of Digital
Photography

Koalascapes

The following series of images combines concepts of landscape, portrait and still life photography. The combination of artisanal objects create a series of environments that Lolo Koala interacts with.

The composition of the shots helps create a character and establish a connection with the viewer, while also featuring the intricate handmade details of the elements in the shot.

While the goal of these shots was to create the feel of a studio shot, these images were shot at home using a black blanket as a backdrop, desk lighting, and a white shower cap as a diffuser.

















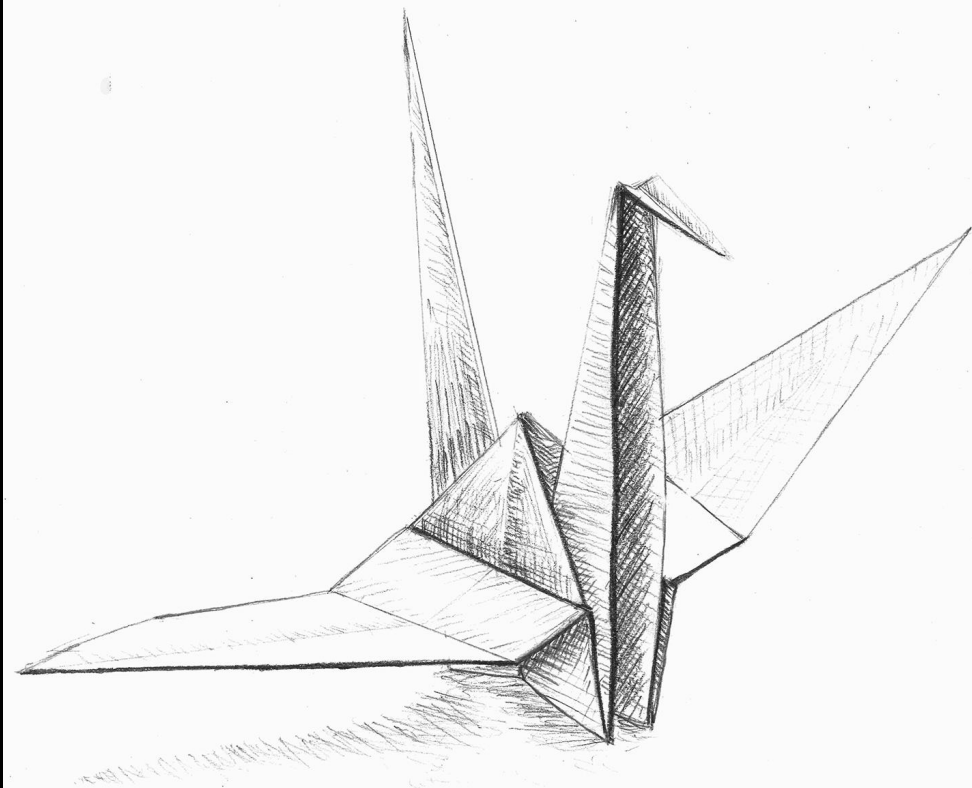
GVC 535:
Drawing and Design
Theory and Practice

Studies of line, shading and form

In these drawings, I explored the use of line and all its different possibilities: contours, implied lines, line weights, and shading through the use of hatching and cross-hatching.

These two images intend to show a contrast between the organic and the geometric through depictions of birds. The first one seeks a more natural representation through the use of movement, organic shapes, and curved lines that guide the viewer's eye through the elements of the composition. The second depicts an artificial abstraction of a bird: an origami crane. The geometric and artificial nature of this bird is also supported by the more symmetric composition of the image and its framing within a perfect square.



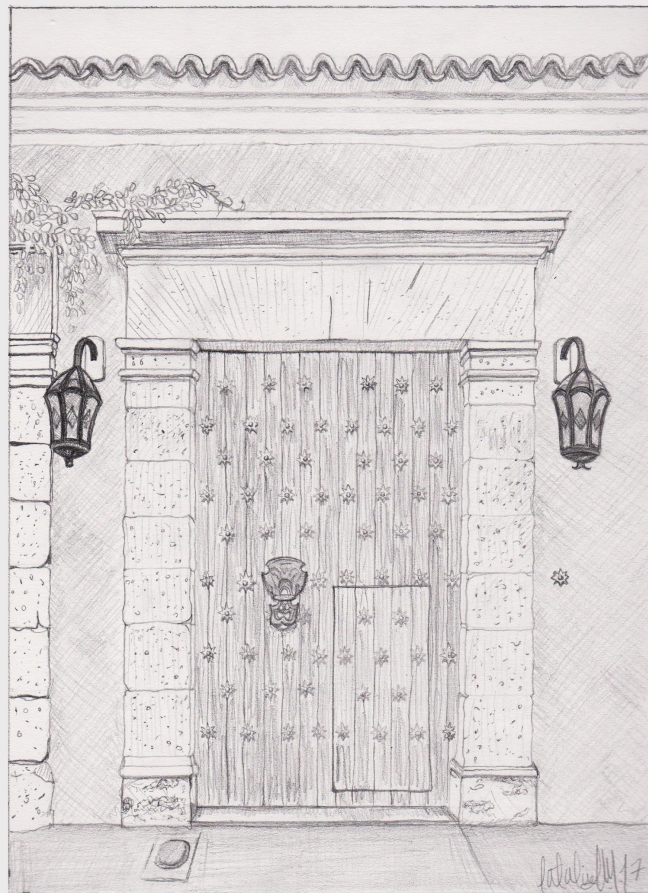


Studies of line, shape and perspective

The campus of the school I attended from kindergarten until the end of high school was a colonial hacienda built in 1750, which sparked my fascination with Spanish colonial architecture in Colombia.

I used three buildings from this time period to do a study in one and two point perspective. The first one is the *Portón de Santo Domingo*, the second one is a corner of *Plaza de San Pedro Claver*, both in Cartagena, and the third is a street in Villa de Leyva.

The last two images were my first immersion in Adobe Illustrator, where I learned to work with bezier curves, and the multiple line and trace tools offered by the software.







Portraits

The following were my first attempts in portraiture, and I was faced with the challenge of capturing the main facial traits that made the subjects' faces recognizable.

The initial drawings were done by hand and later manipulated digitally. The dog's portrait, was colored in photoshop with the aim of achieving the watercolor look of a classic storybook illustration. By contrast, and honoring my husband's love of superheroes, I used Illustrator to color his to achieve a flatter and more vibrant comic book feel.





Máscara

This image is a recreation of an actual photo of a traditional bull mask from the Barranquilla carnival, which, like Mardi Gras and other notorious carnivals, takes place during the last weekend leading up to the first day of lent.

The goal of this work was to create the closest resemblance with the original photo through the use of different colors, gradients, brush strokes, opacity and meshes.

I chose to recreate this mask as it is a clear visual representation of the convergence of Colombia's Spanish and African Heritage, represented in the bull and the intricate decorations of the mask.



Artal 2011

GVC 575:
Imagemaking as Expression

El Conejo y el Mapurite

Through photo manipulation and vector illustration, I transformed a series of photos of Hollywood Beach into the sand dunes of the Guajira desert; the setting of the Wayuu folktale “El Conejo y el Mapurite”.

The following series of drawings are scenes from this tale, in which a shaman skunk heals patients with his medicinal cigars, until a cunning rabbit tricks him into giving him all of them.

The characters were initially hand-drawn and completed in Adobe Illustrator.





















GVC 580:
Animation and Motion
Graphics

Run Away

The storyboard of this animation was inspired by the piece “Five Feet” by Julián Brijaldo. The dynamic nature of the music evoked the image of running heavily through the busy streets of a city.

The main character is a pangolin; an endangered mammal covered in collagen scales. The animal's rigid shell gave the run a feeling of weight, and its ability to roll into a ball opened up new possibilities for movement. The scenes feature different animation techniques like masks, animated type, keyframe animation, and animated sequences for different movements of the pangolin.



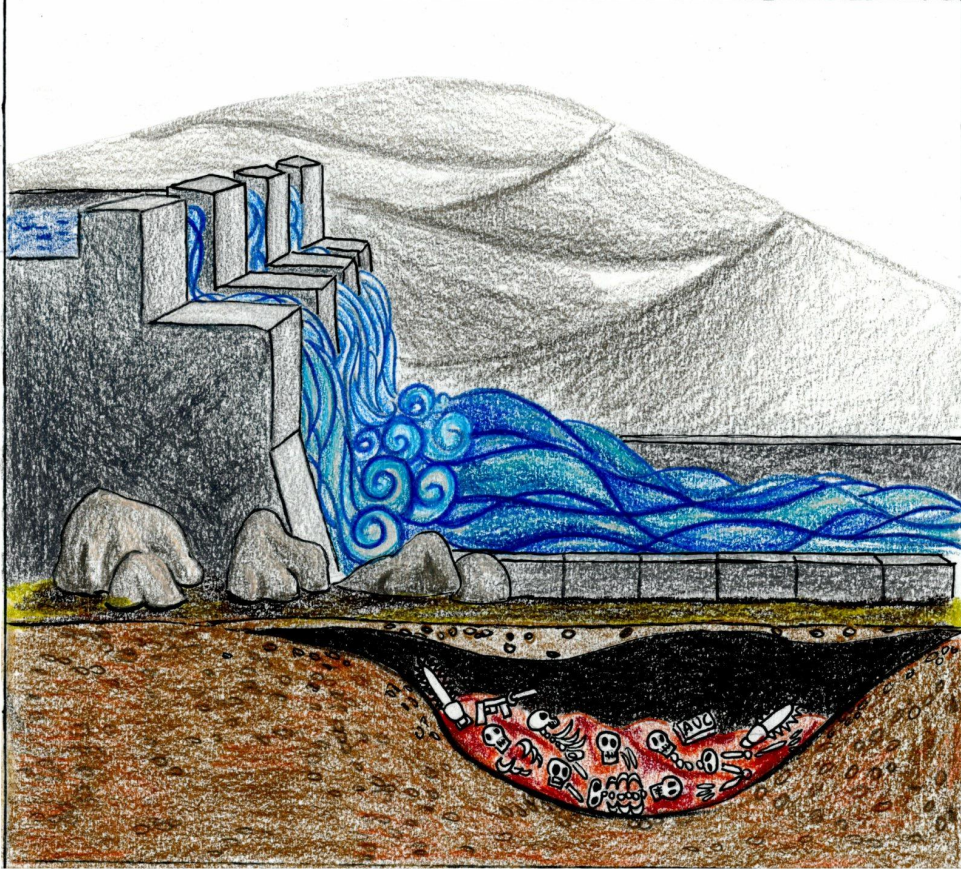
LATER WORK

Colombian Diagnosis

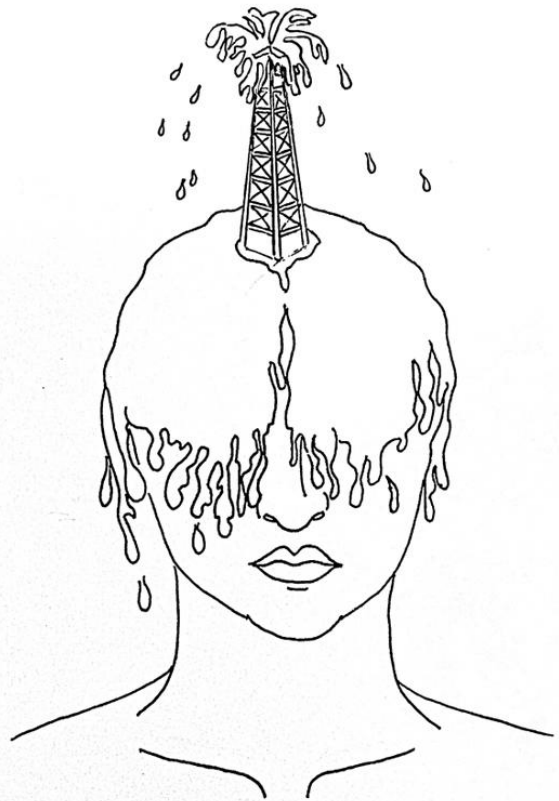
On the weeks leading to the recent presidential election in Colombia, a group of artists and graphic designers created a facebook/instagram challenge to raise awareness about a list of symptoms that indicate a sick malfunctioning government. The wording of the challenge was a play on words that linked actual medical terminology to the actual state of the country. As part of this movement, I created the following five images using color pencils, ink, and Adobe Illustrator.

The works combine concepts like composition and color theory to support their message.

#1 ¿Cómo está tu memoria? ENTERRADA



How is your memory?
BURIED



Día #2: En su historia médica vemos que tiene cataratas que le dificultan ver el panorama completo

In your medical history, we noticed you have cataracts, which prevent you from seeing the full picture.

Día #3: ¿Sufre de miembros fantasma o desaparecidos?



Do you suffer from missing or ghost members(limbs)?

- He said he'd be back soon.

Día #4: Por su anormalidad pulmonar, su biodiversidad está en peligro.



Given your pulmonar abnormality, your biodiversity is at risk.

Día #5: ¿Ha tenido fracturas recientes a nivel minero?

¿Cuántos
días más?



Have you suffered from
any recent fractures in
your mining areas?

- How much longer will
this last?

Dog Portraits

Every dog has a distinct personality and shares a very special bond with their human. I had never thought I would be able to capture this in the first portrait I drew of my dog, Pango. Motivated by this, I have continued working on dog portraits ever since, and have worked with their owners to understand their story and spirit and capture it in my drawings.

To achieve this, I have combined lessons about capturing eyes and expression in digital photography, I have applied newly acquired image editing skills to my source images to reveal hidden details, and used the different line and composition techniques.







Patricia / 18







Final Acknowledgements

As I finish this program at Lynn University, I would like to thank..

Julian Brijaldo: You said I needed this program. This is one of those times I get to say “You were right.” Without your unconditional support, I would have never gone through with it.

Dr. Nava Dushi: You have encouraged me both academically and creatively throughout this whole program. Thank you so much for being such a source of inspiration.

Sherry Henry: You have been a great mentor, friend, and have filled my time at Lynn with much needed laughter. Thanks for helping me believe in myself once again.